1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

This suggests another aspect of the Lower Carrier pattern. The visionary dreams of many animals, though only one or a few prove to be those he can subsequently recall in dreams. Regardless of the tutelary received, the final dream of the quest series is of the grizzly bear.

The Cultural Role

The descriptions above are deficient in at least one respect. They convey no dependable notion of the significance of each concept in relation to the rest of the culture, or the degree to which the concept molds and influences daily life. There are clues, it is true. The Kutenai and the Sanpoil require universal participation of males in the quest whereas but few of the Lower Carrier take part, many of whom at least partially fail. On the other hand, the dramatic nature of the Carrier quest is impressive, but the venture occupies only a month or a year of a man's life.

Upon first contact with the Sanpoil I was deeply impressed both by the intensity of the role played by the guardian spirit and by the extent to which it influenced the culture. Naturally I was uncertain whether this impression was the result of a relatively greater emphasis by the Sanpoil, or merely reflected my own ignorance of Plateau culture. The latter might well have been the case, but after long contact with Plateau peoples I feel more strongly than ever that the group of cultures typified by the Sanpoil represent the high point of the area in this respect. In another place I have expressed my convictions as follows:

> Perhaps nowhere in America did the guardian spirit concept play so great a role in the lives of a people as among the Salishan groups of the [American] Plateau. . . . Not only was the guardian spirit idea highly developed here as a formal religious complex in which very nearly every man participated, but that participation was no passive acquiescence to cultural tradition. It was rather an intense identification highly charged with emotional content. . . . Here spirits were ever present. A man and his tutelary led parallel existences; the one had only to reach out, so to speak, and draw the other to him when the occasion made unitary action or cooperation desirable. The power inherent in the guardian spirit was not, in other words, a talent once conferred and thereafter effective, or a vague store of energy to be drawn upon when needed; but rather a highly specific relationship with a powerful ally available for personal action in any exigency. . . .
>
> In everyday life this intimacy of relationship was reflected in countless references to one's own or another's tutelary, and in the invariable explanation

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

182
771

of all unusual, impressive, or significant occurrences in terms of spirit power. Reference to one's own spirit was never specific, however, but always couched in vague or generic terms: 'my power,' 'my helper,' or, in colloquial English, 'my partner.' This last expression, heard constantly among these peoples even today, reflects most accurately the native attitude toward spirit power.[10]

This domination of life by spirit matters occurs with roughly equal intensity among the Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Colville, Kalispel, and Columbia. Emphasis is only slightly lighter among the Lakes, Spokane, Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead, Wenatchi, and Kittitas, the last a Sahaptin group. Other Sahaptin peoples give markedly less attention to spirit matters but I cannot escape the conviction that this difference is of slight age and the direct result of Plains influence. All Sahaptin peoples share the extended Winter Spirit Dance with the Salish groups mentioned above.

In contrast, the interior Salish of British Columbia (exclusively) lack the Winter Spirit Dance entirely and emphasize the spirit quest and spirit causation more as formal ritual than as deep emotional ideology. For example, spirit intrusion and spirit loss as causes of illness are hardly present here, whereas to the south they are of momentous importance (see below). The period of absence on each spirit quest was considerably longer here than in the American Plateau, but this cannot be used as a criterion. The accumulated time after long repeated one-night quests might easily overbalance that of a single extended quest. The longest quests are found among the Lillooet where the duration may reach a year. Yet few persons engage in the quest and the whole concept plays a definitely minor role. The lengthening of the quest, both in this and in less extreme cases, is clearly the result of formalization and ritual emphasis, not religious intensity. The quest practice here of vigorously rubbing the body with conifer twigs might be interpreted as indicative of spiritual fervor if it were not that the custom is clearly borrowed from the Coast and that the identical explanation—ritual cleanliness—is given for its observance. The same applies to induced vomiting.

The Chilcotin present no problem in this respect. Spirit concepts are clearly of secondary importance in their lives. Their practices lie intermediately between those of the Lillooet and the Carrier. The spirit pattern of the Carrier, while dramatic, does not for a moment contest

[10] Ray, *Bluejay Character*, pp. 593 f.

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

with that of central and southern Plateau groups. An observation by Jenness is to the point: 182 771

> Nevertheless, [Carrier] dreams were so erratic, visitations from the animal world so ungovernable, that no Indian hunter cared to stake all his fortunes upon them. He believed that in ancient days the animals themselves had delivered to him a powerful weapon by disclosing certain "medicines" and rituals that would deliver the game into his hands.[11]

(The latter belief is unknown to the south.)

One last example may illuminate the judgements above. Olson writes, "Nothing bulked larger in Quinault life than the acquisition and control of supernatural power."[12] Now it is certain that the Lower Chinook gave spiritual power greater emphasis than did the Quinault. Further, the Chinook

> quest differed very slightly from that of the Plateau. Even though an interior group as far distant as the Kalispel of northern Idaho be taken for comparison, the quest exhibits no significant difference; while even minor details are impressively similar.[13]

Yet it would never occur to me to equate the *functional intensity* of the Chinook concept and that of the Kalispel, the former is so much the slighter.

Conceptual Factors

For introduction I may refer to the quotation above in which the role of the spirit guardian and helper is discussed and the colloquialism "my partner" is mentioned. 776 787

The expression "my power" is also frequently heard among the English speaking natives of the central Plateau. The two terms "partner" and "power" seem to be used interchangeably. On the other hand the natives seldom or never speak of "spirits" or of "spirit power." Nor do they say "partner power." These English speaking habits have led to considerable confusion and have obscured the point made above. Cline, for example, states of the Southern Okanogan that "One's guardian spirit dwelt somewhere in the woods or mountains, and came to him when he thought of it or needed its aid," a formulation corresponding exactly to that given above. But he also says,

[11] Jenness, *op. cit.*
[12] Olson, *Quinault Indians*, p. 141.
[13] Ray, *Historical Position*, p. 370.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

276 All are habitual smokers, always inhaling the smoke instead of puffing it out after the manner of more civilized devotees of the weed. To obtain tobacco the native will part with almost any other property, but no mention is made of any substitute used in this region before the white man came. Besides his constant use of the pipe as an amusement or habit, the inland native employs it regularly to clear his brain for the transaction of important business. Without the pipe no war is declared, no peace officially ratified; in all promises and contracts it serves as the native pledge of honor; with ceremonial whiffs to the cardinal points the wise men open and close the deliberations of their councils; a commercial smoke clinches a bargain, as it also opens negotiations of trade.[188]

177 231 182 The use of the horse has doubtless been a most powerful agent in molding inland customs; and yet the introduction of the horse must have been of comparatively recent date. What were the customs and character of these people, even when America was first discovered by the Spaniards, must ever be unknown. It is by no means certain that the possession of the horse has materially bettered their condition. Indeed, by facilitating the capture of buffalo, previously taken perhaps by stratagem, by introducing a medium with which at least the wealthy may always purchase supplies, as well as by rendering practicable long migrations for food and trade, the

535 square, stood on the same place, and merely jumped up at intervals, to keep time to the music.' *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 526, 531. Nez Percés dance round a pole on Sundays, and the chiefs exhort during the pauses.
533 *Irving's Bonneville's Adven.*, pp. 101–2, 245. In singing 'they use *hi, ah*, in constant repetition,.....and instead of several parts harmonizing, they only take eighths one above another, never exceeding three.' *Parker's Explor. Tour*, pp. 242–3. 'The song was a simple expression of a few sounds, no intelligible words being uttered. It resembled the words *ho-ha-ha-ha-ho-ha-ha-ha*, commencing in a low tone, and gradually swelling to a full, round, and beautifully modulated chorus.' *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 108. Chualpay scalp-dance. *Kane's Wand.*, p. 315. Religious songs. *Dunn's Oregon*, pp. 338–40. *Palmer's Jour.*, p. 124.

276 [188] De Smet thinks inhaling tobacco smoke may prevent its injurious effects. *Voy.*, p. 207. In all religious ceremonies the pipe of peace is smoked. *Ross' Adven.*, pp. 288–9. *Parker's Explor. Tour*, p. 286; *Hines' Voy.*, p. 184. 'The medicine-pipe is a sacred pledge of friendship among all the northwestern tribes.' *Stevens*, in *Ind. Aff. Rep't.*, 1854, p. 220.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

horse may have contributed somewhat to their present spirit of improvidence. The horses feed in large droves, each marked with some sign of ownership, generally by clipping the ears, and when required for use are taken by the lariat, in the use of which all the natives have some skill, though far inferior to the Mexican *vaqueros*. The method of breaking and training horses is a quick and an effectual one. It consists of catching and tying the animal; then buffalo-skins and other objects are thrown at and upon the trembling beast, until all its fear is frightened out of it. When willing to be handled, horses are treated with great kindness, but when refractory, the harshest measures are adopted. They are well trained to the saddle, and accustomed to be mounted from either side. They are never shod and never taught to trot. The natives are skillful riders, so far as the ability to keep their seat at great speed over a rough country is concerned, but they never ride gracefully, and rarely if ever perform the wonderful feats of horsemanship so often attributed to the western Indians. A loose girth is used under which to insert the knees when riding a wild horse. They are hard riders, and horses in use always have sore backs and mouths. Women ride astride, and quite as well as the men; children also learn to ride about as early as to walk.[189] Each nation has its superstitions; by each individual is recognized the influence of unseen powers, exercised usually through the medium of his medicine animal chosen early in life. The peculiar customs arising from this belief in the supernatural are not very numerous or complicated, and belong rather to the religion of these people treated elsewhere. The Pend d'Oreille, on approaching manhood,

[189] In moving, the girls and small boys ride three or four on a horse with their mothers, while the men drive the herds of horses that run loose ahead. *Lord's Nat.*, vol. i., pp. 71–3, 306. Horses left for months without a guard, and rarely stray far. 'They call this 'caging' them. *De Smet, Voy.*, pp. 187, 47. 56. 'Babies of fifteen months old, packed in a sitting posture, rode along without fear, grasping the reins with their tiny hands.' *Stevens*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. xii., pt. ii., p. 130, with plate; *Gibbs*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 404–5; *Pahlcer's Rept.*, p. 73; *Farnham's Trav.*, pp. 89–; *Domenech's Deserts*, vol. ii., p. 64; *Irving's Astoria*, p. 365; *Franchere's Nar.*, pp. 269–71; *Cox's Adven.*, vol. ii., pp. 110–11.